

# **DNREC closes recreational shellfish harvest in north Delaware Bay due to undertreated wastewater from Kent County treatment plant**

**DOVER** – Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary Shawn M. Garvin today directed the Kent County wastewater treatment plant to take immediate action to correct an ongoing discharge of undertreated effluent that prompted the Secretary to issue an emergency order for the closure of recreational shellfishing in the Delaware Bay north of the entrance to the Mispillion Inlet. The emergency closure impacts only the harvest of bivalve molluscan shellfish – clams, oysters and mussels – and does not affect the legal harvest of other shellfish species such as crabs and conchs.

The emergency order was necessitated by possible health risks from the undertreated wastewater discharged into the Murderkill River by the Kent County treatment plant. Undertreated wastewater can contaminate shellfish growing areas. While there is no commercial oystering currently taking place in the Delaware Bay, recreational harvest of hard clams does occur at this time of year.

The shellfish closure will last for 21 days after wastewater discharge issues at the Kent County treatment plant have been corrected and the bacterial water quality of the effluent has returned to acceptable levels. The closure timeframe is based on US Food and Drug Administration Guidelines under the National Shellfish Sanitation Program, and provides adequate public health protection for pathogens of concern, including viruses.

DNREC also advises not swimming in the affected area of Delaware Bay or other physical contact with the water.

The emergency Secretary's Order can be found on the DNREC website at [http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/Info/Pages/SecOrders\\_Regulations.aspx](http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/Info/Pages/SecOrders_Regulations.aspx)

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